Nickolai's Birthday Celebration Ends Unhappily at Saugus

By VINCE KOWALICK,
Times Staff Writer

Steve Nickolai of Simi Valley had everything going for him—the lead in the Street Stock standings, a trophy-dash victory and the pole position for Saturday night's 25-lap main event—all on his 36th birthday—before a crowd of 3,594 at Saugus Speedway.

Yet, after the race—in which he finished last—an angered Nickolai practically crushed an aluminum can in his fist.

Nickolai was black-flagged twice, the second on Lap 15, forcing him from the race, as fellow Simi Valley resident Dale White Jr., took the checkered flag.

A jubilant White, who established a track-oval qualifying record of 18.69 seconds, credited the win to his pit crew.

"Just a bunch of enthusiastic buddies," said White, who began the evening fifth in the standings.

Nickolai was waved to the pits during the race's only yellow flag on Lap 10 because of a fluid leak. He was flagged the second time for a driving violation, after which he spun into the infield and parked it.

"They said it was a fuel leak," Nickolai said, referring to track officials. "I get in the pits, check the car—there's not a drop."

White contended that track officials played no part in the outcome.

"I would have run him til his tires got hot and gotten under him," White said. "I was just waiting."

Dave Phipps of Simi Valley, the three-time defending Sportsman champion, won that division's 40-lap main event to pick up his first win of the new season. Phipps, who began the evening fifth in the points standings, started the race on the pole and led the entire way.

Rick Crowe of Canyon Country won the 15-lap Street Stock figure 8 main event. For Crowe, sixth in the standings, the win was his second of the season.

Herb Hill of Simi Valley won the 12-lap Sportsman semi-main event and Dale Petty of Agoura won the Street Stock oval main event.

Eight-lap Sportsman heat race winners included Rusty Parr of Newhall, Arlyn Olson of Chatsworth and Ace Bennett of Monrovia. Eight-lap Street Stock oval heat race winners included John Schwetz and Jim Marlewski, both of Simi Valley, Rip Michaels of Arleta and Burt Tester of Canoga Park.

Phipps wins, rises in standings

By BOB CHEVALIER
Daily News Staff Writer

SAUGUS — Three-time champion Dave Phipps made a strong move in the points standings with his victory in the NASCAR Winston Racing Series sportsman main event Saturday at Saugus Speedway.

Phipps unofficially moved behind third-place finisher and point-leader Gary Sigman of Carson. Will Harper of Tarzana tailed Phipps throughout the 40-lap race, finishing second. Bobby Oliver of Granada Hills and Michael Ayers of Camarillo finished fourth and fifth respectively.

Harper set a track record in sportsman qualifying at 16.95 seconds, taking 1/100th of a second off the 2-year-old mark by Rusty Parr of Newhall.

In street stock main event, Dale White of Simi Valley finished first, followed by Eric Foster of North Hollywood, Craig Rayburn of Simi Valley, Tom Kimmel of Sylmar and John Cran of Reseda.

In street stock figure eight racing, Rick Crow of Canyon Country finished first, followed by Craig Lee of Little Rock, and Tom Eurton of Valencia.

In the opening night mini stock main event, Pat Dennison of Van Nuys won, followed by Steve Katz of Granada Hills and Tony Polisano of Northridge.

In trophy dash races, 19-year-old Keith Spangler of Northridge won the sportsman event. Steve Nickoloi of Simi Valley won the street stock event. Russ Beckers of Sepulveda won the street stock figure eight. Polisano won the mini stock.